Huge Rally Protests U.S. War Policies

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By Paul Valentine
Washington Post Staff Writer

A crowd variously estimated at from 25,000 to 100,000 people thronged the Washington Monument grounds yesterday to protest the continuing Indochina fighting as President Nixon entered his second term in inaugural pomp a few blocks away.

The protesters—old and young, mostly white, waving a vast array of antiwar and anti-Nixon banners—peacefully rallied at the grounds after a march from the Lincoln Memorial under cold, blustery skies.

"Most of us standing here . . . represent the soul of American democracy," boomed the voice of longtime war critic Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.) over the crowd. "We are prepared to keep coming back. We are not going to stop protesting or start celebrating until a peace agreement is actually signed."

"I hope this is the last time any group of Americans have to come together in this way for this purpose," said Sen. Philip A. Hart (D-Mich.), one of several members of Congress who joined the antiwar rally rather than participate in of-

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ficial inauguration ceremonies.

The National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) and People's Coalition for Peace and Justice (PCPJ), joint sponsors of the rally, estimated the crowd at 100,000. However, U.S. Park Police put the figure at 30,000 and the Washington metropolitan police department estimated it at 25,000.

The crowd, whose size surprised organizers, is the largest antiwar gathering here since April 24, 1971, when a police-estimated rally of 175,000 protesters demonstrated at the Capitol against the war.

In addition to the main rally yesterday, smaller groups of Vietnam veterans and radical students staged separate marches.

Small bands of hecklers dotted the inaugural route along Pennsylvania Avenue NW, and police occasionally shoved back groups pressing to reach the street. Eighteen arrests were made by 5:30 p.m.

A crowd of about 300 demonstrators shouted obscenities and threw fruit, tin cans and a few pebbles towards President and Mrs. Nixon as they passed in their open limousine at 14th Street. Neither was hit. The President waved amicably at the group and made a "V" sign with both hands. The limousine, surrounded by Secret Service agents, did not speed up as it passed the group.

Two hours later after the parade, about 1,000 protesters sped up 14th Street but were immediately cut off and broken up into small groups by police. The crowd dispersed after the police left.

During the late morning, some 1,400 supporters of the militant Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) marched from 8th and H Streets NE to Union Station Plaza near the Capitol to protest what they called American imperialism and racism.

Organizers shouted to black bystanders to join them as they marched along riot-scarred H Street, but few did.

After a brief rally at Union Station Plaza, the crowd marched around the east side of the Capitol and then west along Independence Avenue to join the main ument grounds.

Earlier in the morning, some 200 youthful Yippies wearing Mickey Mouse masks took the same route from 8th and H Streets NE to Union Station, dragging a 25-foot paper-and-chicken-wire rat that they said symbolized President Nixon. There, they destroyed the rat, then dispersed.

By Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

The sound of music: a brass section in action.

In still another protest action, about 3,000 Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and their supporters marched from Arlington Cemetery across Memorial Bridge to a symbolic peace-treaty signing in West Potomac Park near 17th Street.

The main NPAC-PCPJ march to the Washington Monument grounds at midday was led by a "March Against Death" contingent of about 100 persons wearing black robes and white paint on their faces. Marching silently to a soft drum bat, some carried symbolic coffins, others wore signs with the names of bombed Vietnamese villages.

Leading the contingent was a shrouded man carrying a rough cross made of sticks and draped in black.

Other contingents in the march ranged from student and trade union groups to GIs, minorities and a band of "Gays for Peace."

Hundreds of volunteer marshals shepherded the marchers down Constitution Avenue as they moved in a slow, orderly line.

"Out now, out now" and "Nixon is a racist swine, make him sign on the dotted line," shouted various marchers.

Reflecting the wide constituency of NPAC and PCPJ, the 16 speakers at the rally ranged from Sen. Hart, pacifist leader Bradford Lyttle and activist Catholic priest Phillip Berrigan to homosexual rights advocate Franklin Kameny and 1972 Communist Party vice presidential candidate Jarvis Tyner.

"Never have people been so aroused," said PCPJ national coordinator Sidney Peck. "Never have our people been so angry. Never have we gathered in Washington in such numbers in midwinter on such short notice."

"There are more Americans here at the Washington Monument saying no to the war than there are a half-mile away at the inauguration saying yes to Richard Nixon," said NPAC coordinator Jerry Gordon. "Nixon said peace is at hand, but, looking around here today, it appears that not everyone is convinced."

Gordon, clearly surprised and pleased at the large rally turnout, told a reporter that NPAC had originally predicted "tens of thousands, and it is obvious there are many, many tens of thousands."

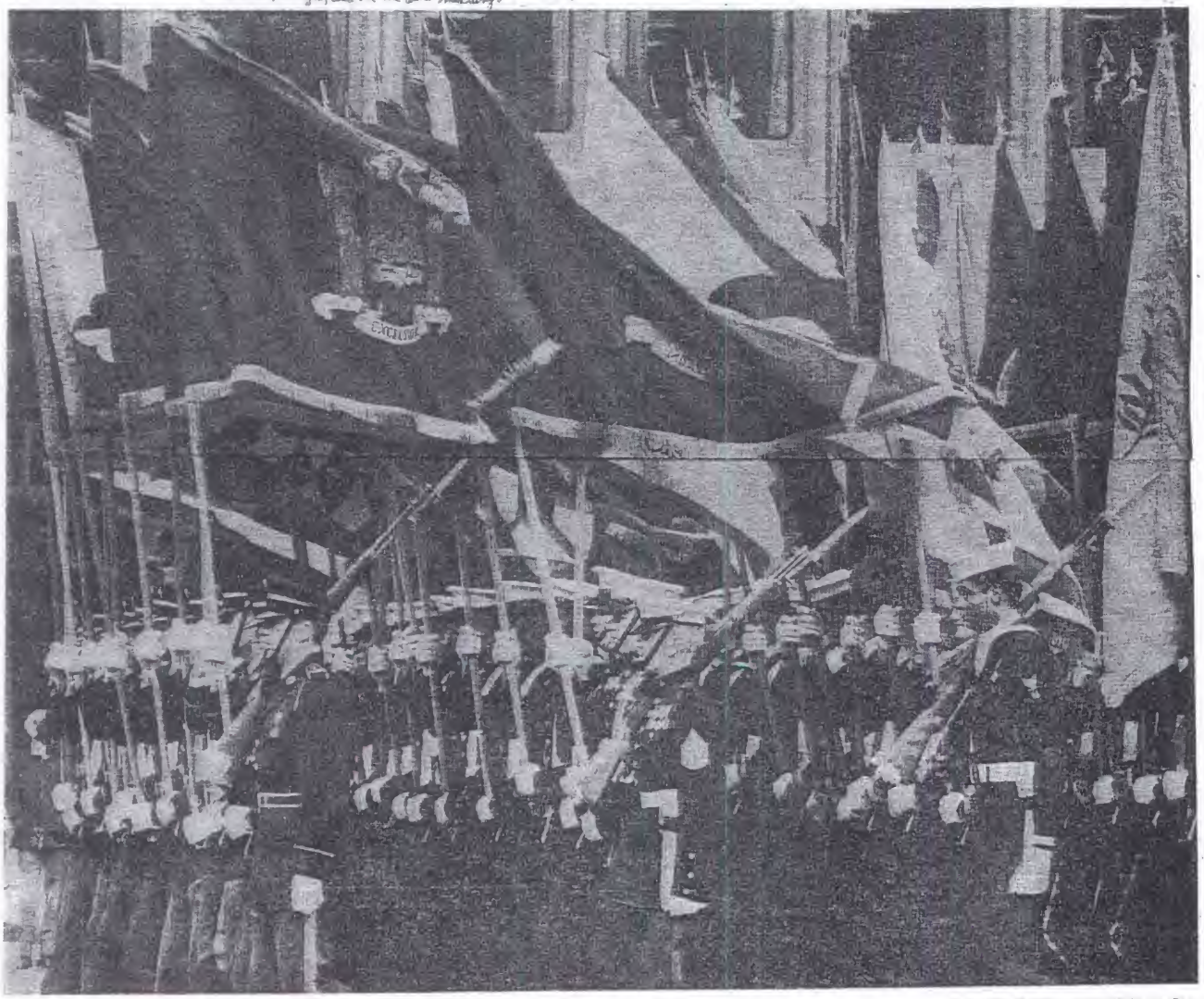
A sense of "horror and revulsion about the continuation of the war" drew the large crowd, he said. "They feel lied to about the war by Kissinger and Nixon, and they feel the war is at a critical point and want to influence and pressure the decision-making at this point."

Among those arrested yesterday were 10 persons charged with disorderly conduct at 7th Street and Pennsylvnia Avenue NW, including New York Daily News reporter Frank A. Van Riper.

Contributing to Inaugural Day articles were Washington Post staff writers Alfred E. Lewis, Joanne Omang, B. D. Colen, Timothy S. Robinson, Ronald Taylor, William Claiborne, Eugene L. Meyer, Bart Barnes, Raul Ramirez, Betty Medsger, and Frank Jones.

Have noted your marking of Nixon speech. We both note the same passages, and see the same meanings HR

I presume you wanted this returned



By James W. K. Atherton—The Washington Post

Massed colors, borne by members of the military services, pas in review.